

## SOME NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS IN PANAMA.

BY L. L. JEWEL, C. E.

DURING the greater part of 1911 and up to September, 1912, the author lived at Gatún, Canal Zone, and nearly all Sundays and holidays during this period were spent in collecting and studying native birds. Naturally, many birds of the A. O. U. Check-List were observed, some resident in Panama and some transients or winter visitors. After July, 1911, records of the occurrence of such have been kept as completely as available time would allow. In many cases specimens were taken as recorded in the annotated list following.

Gatún is situated seven miles inland and directly south of Colón, at the beginning of what are practically the first foot hills of the Isthmus. The coast-line swings so far in just west of Colón, however, that only three or four miles of low flat land — some of it very marshy — separates Gatún from the bay. Indeed, salt water now comes up the old French canal, the East Diversion and the new American canal, to the very door of Gatún.

The valley of the Rio Chagres is here about a mile and a half wide and is now, of course, filled across by the Gatún locks, dam and spillway. This construction work has destroyed much cover, but on the other hand, the clearings made in and about the town of Gatún and the partial filling of Gatún lake have perhaps made the locality more attractive to certain migrant birds from the north.

To the south of Gatún the ridges diverge rapidly with miles of the Black Swamp country stretching between them and only a few thickly grown knolls less than one hundred feet high scattered here and there. Practically all of these will be submerged when the lake is altogether filled.

The higher hills on either side of the valley at Gatún, are about two hundred and fifty feet above sea level, with a few points reaching to twice that elevation.

Just three miles south of Gatún on the old line of the Panama Railroad, and in the heart of the Black Swamp country is, or rather was, Loma de Leon, or Lion Hill. It is now accessible only by

canoe and will soon be lost under the rising waters of Gatún lake. Thus passes perhaps, the foremost land-mark of Middle American ornithology.

In presenting the dates for the species given below, attention might be called to the very short time which some northern birds are absent from the tropics.

The Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) for example, is recorded in every month of the year, except May and June, and this by intermittent observance covering but little more than one year's time. It is, of course, probable that some few individuals of this species may fail to join the northward movement, and for some reason or other, spend the entire breeding season in the tropics; but the arrival of apparently healthy birds in early August, indicates how quickly the return trip is made after the family is reared.

The Semi-palmated Plover (*Egialitis semipalmata*) is still earlier in making the return trip, some arriving on the Isthmus shortly after the middle of July.

Along with the group of early Shore Birds and Swallows, is another Passerine bird which arrives in Panama while it is yet summer in the temperate zone. This is the Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva aestiva*) which certainly may be found in Panama in every month but June and July. This means that long before the last birds have left the breeding grounds in the northern United States, the advance guard is in Panama. Again, in the spring, when first arrivals are choosing nesting sites as far north as New England many of their kind are still flitting and feeding among the mangoes and guavas three thousand miles southward. Certainly a remarkable distribution.

All birds of the A. O. U. Check-List which were identified with certainty, are included in the following list. For several identifications of subspecies, I am indebted to Mr. W. W. Grant of Englewood, N. J., and Mr. W. de Witt Miller of the American Museum of Natural History.

1. **Larus atricilla.** LAUGHING GULL.—A single individual was seen at the mouth of the old French canal near Colón on December 10 and three more at the same place on December 13, 1911.

2. **Sterna hirundo.** COMMON TERN.—One bird of this species was shot from a flock of the following at Gatún, on December 3, 1911. A single bird was taken on Gatún lake on June 9, 1912.

3. **Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis.** BLACK TERN.—A few frequented Gatún lake from December 3 to 13, 1911. One specimen taken.
4. **Anhinga anhinga.** WATER TURKEY.—Sparingly resident in the Gatún lake district.
5. **Pelecanus occidentalis.** BROWN PELICAN.—Fairly common on the Atlantic side. Have also seen them on Gatún lake.
6. **Pelecanus californicus.** CALIFORNIA BROWN PELICAN.—Common on the Pacific side.
7. **Fregata aquila.** MAN-O'-WAR BIRD.—A common resident, especially on the Pacific side.
8. **Anas platyrhynchos.** MALLARD.—Seems to be a rare visitor. One seen on a small lake near Miraflores (Pacific side) on November 26, 1911. Only record.
9. **Querquedula discors.** BLUE-WINGED TEAL.—Probably the earliest migrant duck to arrive in Panama. First record is October 14, 1911. A week later it was abundant and for awhile continued so in the marshes around Mindi. Several stomachs were examined and the contents consisted largely of a small round green unknown seed. The flesh was excellent. On one occasion, I found three birds standing leg deep in the soft hydraulic fill of Gatún dam. The last record is February 7, 1912, but the species was abundant only through November, most of the birds apparently going on into South America.
10. **Marila affinis.** LESSER SCAUP DUCK.—A very abundant duck on Gatún lake during the winter months. The earliest record is November 25, 1911, and the latest is March 25, 1912.
11. **Ajaia ajaja.** ROSEATE SPOON-BILL.—One seen at Gatún in November, 1911. Probably a rare resident.
12. **Ardea herodias herodias.** GREAT BLUE HERON.—One positive record on October 29, 1911. This bird was seen at Mindi and inspected closely. In fact, it seemed very reluctant to take wing and only did so after repeated approaches to probably 30 feet. Other records were made at various times, but on June 9, 1912, a heron was shot on the Gatún River which is clearly another species -- or at least, another form. I therefore feel some doubt as to all records for this bird, except the one given above, and believe there is a resident heron in Panama entirely distinct from the present species, being slightly smaller and without any rufus on the thighs. So far as I am now aware, it is as yet undescribed.
13. **Egretta candidissima candidissima.** SNOWY EGRET.—One specimen taken at Mindi on September 1, 1912. Probably a rare resident.
14. **Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis.** LOUISIANA HERON.—Sparingly resident.
15. **Florida cærulea cærulea.** LITTLE BLUE HERON.—The most abundant member of the family in Panama. The great majority of the birds are however white. There must be twenty white ones to each blue, with occasionally one of mixed plumage.
16. **Nycticorax nycticorax nævius.** BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON.

— One specimen taken at Mindi on October 29, 1911. An immature female.

17. **Porzana carolina.** SORA.— On October 1, 1911, Mr. Harry Ferguson of Toro Point shot and presented to me for preservation, a bird of this species. It was, at high noon on a bare coral beach, in the shadow of a high rock cliff, up which it was attempting to climb. Several birds were seen on October 7 and again October 14, 1911, at Mindi.

18. **Ionornis martinica.** PURPLE GALLINULE.— A common resident.

19. **Gallinula galeata.** FLORIDA GALLINULE.— Probably rare. One recorded January 18, 1911.

20. **Himantopus mexicanus.** BLACK-NECKED STILT.— From November 4 to 11, 1911, it was reported to me daily that "a funny snipe with a black back and red legs" was feeding in the west valley of Gatún Dam. I went out and took it on November 11. Except that it was not a snipe, that its back was not black and its legs not quite red, the description was fairly accurate. No others have been recorded.

21. **Gallinago delicata.** WILSON'S SNIPE.— Abundant for a few weeks during October and November. They become much less abundant in December but some birds remain all winter while greater numbers pass on southward. The earliest record is October 7, 1911 and the last January 7, 1912.

22. **Pisobia maculata.** PECTORAL SANDPIPER.— This bird is abundant in the grassy marshes about Mindi for a short period. Dates October 7 to 22, 1911.

23. **Pisobia minutilla.** LEAST SANDPIPER.— These dainty little birds are perhaps the most abundant sandpiper in Panama, except *Actitis macularia*. One was taken at Toro Point on September 4, 1911, and again on August 23, 1912. Last one seen in spring at Gatún, February 18. A large flock spent the entire winter in the hydraulic fill of Gatún Dam.

24. **Ereunetes pusillus.** SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPER.— Found sparingly with the preceding species. September 4, 1911, to February 22, 1912, are extreme dates for the season.

25. **Totanus flavipes.** LESSER YELLOW-LEGS.— A single specimen of this species was taken at Gatún on August 27, 1911. The next record is October 7, but after that date, it was abundant for some four weeks. November 30 is the last record until March 3, 1912, when one individual was seen.

26. **Helodromas solitarius solitarius.** SOLITARY SANDPIPER. An abundant visitor. September 9, 1911, and September 1, 1912, are fall dates. The last bird was seen February 25, 1912.

27. **Bartramia longicauda.** UPLAND PLOVER.— This species arrived in Gatún, September 12, 1911, and was not rare until December 8, when the last bird was seen. In 1912, the first bird was seen on September 1. For weeks they were in, and around, Gatún daily, feeding and even roosting at the very doors of the quarters. Often at night, they could be heard to cry out in apparent alarm and then trail off into their peculiar soothing notes of content as they were answered by others near.

28. **Tryngites subruficollis.** BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER.— One of a pair was taken in a high, dry, pasture near Gatún, on October 18, 1911. Another was seen in the same location on March 29, 1912. Two records only.

29. **Actitis macularia.** SPOTTED SANDPIPER.— This species is present in Panama in all months of the year, except perhaps, May and June. August 31, 1911 and August 4, 1912 are fall dates, and April 24, 1911 and April 28, 1912 are extreme spring dates of departure.

30. **Numenius hudsonicus.** HUDSONIAN CURLEW.— One of the bird surprises of my life was to see a Hudsonian Curlew tip-toe and catch butterflies within twenty feet of my front door at Gatún. The clearings in and around the town seemed very attractive to these birds and they were fairly tame. Marching or advancing by rushes, always with graceful dignity, sometimes singly but more often in groups of four or five, they foraged through the shorter grass, picking up or catching on the wing their insect food. They usually kept near the water's edge or well down in dry gullies but also fed on higher ground at times. The earliest record is of October 1, and the last, November 3, 1911.

31. **Oxyechus vociferus.** KILDEER.— First record, November 26, 1911 and the last, March 3, 1912. This is the only bird of the shore-bird group more abundant in late winter than earlier, which would seem to indicate that Panama is nearly the southern limit of its range.

32. **Ægialitis semipalmata.** SEMPALMATED PLOVER.— The earliest record for this bird is July 23, 1911,— a flock of seven at Toro Point. On August 4, 1912, I visited there again, and found them abundant. January 28, 1912, is the last record.

33. **Catharista urubu.** BLACK VULTURE.— A common resident.

34. **Circus hudsonius.** MARSH HAWK.— This is a common winter visitor. October 24 and April 18, 1911 and 1912 are the extreme dates.

35. **Buteo swainsoni.** SWAINSON'S HAWK.— A female of this species was taken at Gatún on December 8, 1911. The skin was given to Mr. E. A. Goldman to whom I am indebted for confirmatory identification.

36. **Buteo platypterus.** BROAD-WINGED HAWK.— The most common migrant hawk in Panama, but is less in evidence than *Circus hudsonicus* or *Falco sparverius* because it usually stays well in the forest. Specimens have been taken, but extreme dates are not recorded.

37. **Falco sparverius sparverius.** SPARROW HAWK.— A common winter visitor around the towns. Extreme dates October 24 and April 5, 1911 and 1912. During this period, they were in almost daily evidence about Gatún. Have heard them call repeatedly as if it were nesting-time back home.

38. **Crotophaga ani.** ANI.— I had expected to find *C. sulcirostris* here but have seen none. This species is one of the most abundant of resident birds.

39. **Coccyzus americanus americanus.** YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO.— Two records October 22 (specimen) and November 3, 1911.

40. **Ceryle alcyon alcyon.** BELTED KINGFISHER.— Not common. October 1 to March 3 are extreme dates.
41. **Ceryle torquata.** RINGED KINGFISHER.— A fairly common resident.
42. **Ceryle septentrionalis isthmicus.** ISTHMIAN KINGFISHER.— An abundant resident which is included in this list because the range of *americana* is given in the Check-List as south as Panama. This form was separated only last year by Mr. E. A. Goldman.
43. **Chordeiles virginianus virginianus.** NIGHTHAWK.— I do not believe this species winters in Panama. Numbers pass through September 11 to November 29. Specimens taken, October 23. Other dates may, of course, apply to other forms.
44. **Chordeiles acutipennis texensis.** TEXAS NIGHTHAWK.— A pair was taken at Gatún on December 10, 1911.
45. **Amizilis tzacatl tzacatl.** RIEFFER'S HUMMINGBIRD.— The most common member of the family at all seasons.
46. **Tyrannus t. tyrannus.** KINGBIRD.— A rare winter visitor. No extreme dates recorded.
47. **Tyrannus dominicensis.** GRAY KINGBIRD.— Rare. Specimen taken February 14, 1912. May breed sparingly.
48. **Myiarchus crinitus.** CRESTED FLYCATCHER.— A few winter. No extreme dates.
49. **Myiochanes virens.** WOOD PEWEE.— Not uncommon during the winter months. My earliest date is October 15 and the latest is January 14. It is not a silent migrant.
50. **Myiochanes r. richardsoni.** WESTERN WOOD PEWEE.— I have one specimen taken April 4, 1911. I have never seen another bird of the species.
51. **Empidonax flaviventris.** YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER.— I am not familiar with this species, but have one bird taken January 1, 1912, which I believe belongs here.
52. **Empidonax t. trailli.** TRAILL'S FLYCATCHER.— I took one bird of this species on January 14, 1912. Have no other record.
53. **Icterus spurius.** ORCHARD ORIOLE.— I have seen this bird only in the spring and late winter. It is not common. My earliest record is February 18, 1912 and the latest, March 4.
54. **Icterus galbula.** BALTIMORE ORIOLE.— Have seen this bird but once — when I took a male just acquiring breeding plumage, on February 22, 1912. He was in a large tree on bank of the Rio Chagres with several of preceding species. I looked carefully, but could find no others.
55. **Megaquiscalus major macrourus.** GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE.— A not uncommon resident on the Pacific side of the Isthmus, but less common on the Atlantic side.
56. **Spiza americana.** DICKCISSEL.— Common for about a week or ten days in March. My earliest record is March 6 and my latest, April 5. I have never seen the bird except during the period mentioned.

57. *Piranga erythromelas*. SCARLET TANAGER.— Have seen but one, March 16, 1911.

59. *Progne chalybea*. GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN.— A common resident. Breeds in holes in trees and has also learned to nest within the iron ridge rolls of corrugated iron roofs.

59. *Hirundo erythrogastra*. BARN SWALLOW.— This bird is abundant in both fall and spring but rare in mid-winter. My earliest record is August 23, 1911. Within a week they were abundant and were seen daily until December 5, when they rapidly disappeared. January and February are without a record. On March 17 they reappeared to become again common for six weeks or perhaps less. My last record for 1912, is May 26, when I recorded several. On May 30, 1911, I shot one from a flock of *Iridoprocne albilinea*. It will thus be seen that their local schedule is roughly three months on, and three months off — passing twice in the year.

60. *Riparia riparia*. BANK SWALLOW.— Fairly common for two months in the fall, but much less so in the spring. My earliest record is September 23, 1911, and the latest is November 30, 1911, except a small flight on February 22, 1912.

61. *Mniotilta varia*. BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER.— One specimen of this species was taken on March 26, 1911, the only one I have seen. It was with one Redstart and several Yellow Warblers.

62. *Protonotaria citrea*. PROTHONOTARY WARBLER.— My earliest record for this beautiful species is October 1, 1911. It was occasionally seen until in late November, but I have no December record. The last date is January 29.

63. *Vermivora chrysoptera*. GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER.— A very rare visitor in my experience. My only certain record is March 10, 1911.

64. *Dendroica aestiva aestiva*. YELLOW WARBLER.— By far the most abundant representative of the family here. I have one female taken August 29, 1911, and one taken August 18, 1912. From late September until the end of the year, I found them common. They are less so in January and February, but are again common in March. My last record is May 12, 1912. Thus one year's record shows an entire absence of this species of but little more than three months. Before the last birds leave this latitude for their breeding range, the first ones are in Nova Scotia, Manitoba and British Columbia.

65. *Dendroica pensylvanica*. CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER.— This species is not rare here during the winter months. My earliest record is November 26 and the last is March 31.

66. *Dendroica castanea*. BAY-BREASTED WARBLER.— This is not a rare migrant in November and December. My earliest record is November 3, 1911, and my last is January 1, 1912.

67. *Seiurus aurocapillus*. On November 26, 1911, while hunting in a thicket near Gatún, I heard the familiar call-note of this bird. I answered and called the bird to me. Have seen no other than this specimen.

68. *Seiurus noveboracensis noveboracensis* WATER-THRUSH.—

A common winter visitor. My extreme dates are October 15, 1911, and April 20, 1912.

69. **Seiurus motacilla.** LOUISIANA WATER THRUSH.— Not common. I have seen it here on October 29, 1911, and again on February 11 and 18, 1912 — a total of three records.

70. **Oporornis formosa.** KENTUCKY WARBLER.— Not a common visitor, but perhaps more winter here than one would think from the number seen. They walk about in the heavy damp jungle, calling with the same unmistakable metallic chirp as they do in their breeding haunts. My earliest record is February 22 and the last is March 24, 1912.

71. **Oporornis philadelphia.** MOURNING WARBLER.— Being unable to accurately distinguish between this species and *tolmei* in the field, I can record with certainty, only two dates for this bird. One male taken at Gatún on April 7 and another on April 28, 1912. It (or *tolmei*) is not rare in October and November and again throughout April.

72. **Wilsonia canadensis.** CANADIAN WARBLER.— I have seen but one bird of this species. A male taken at Gatún on April 28, 1912.

73. **Setophaga ruticilla.** REDSTART.— Not uncommon at times. My earliest record is October 1, 1911, and the last is March 31. The longest interval without a record is January 1 to 23.

74. **Dumetella carolinensis.** CATBIRD.— On February 22, 1911, I saw three birds of this species near Gatún, but have seen it on no other occasion.

---

## GENERAL NOTES.

**Holboell's Grebe** (*Colymbus holbælli*) at Bedford, Mass.— Feb. 15, 1913, Mr. William H. Simonds found a Holboell's Grebe on the ice of Concord river. The bird was in good condition but apparently exhausted. It was brought to the village and identified and on the next day, the 16th, was carried back to the river bank and apparently there took care of itself and was *thought* to have been seen a day later in open water.— CHARLES W. JENKS, Bedford, Mass.

**The Dovekie** (*Alle alle*): an Addition to the Fauna of South Carolina.— I am indebted to my friend Dr. Leonard C. Sanford, for the gift of a beautifully mounted specimen of a male Dovekie, which was picked up dead off Beaufort, S. C., in February, 1909, and forwarded to him in the flesh. Mr. H. H. Brimley has recorded the abundance of this bird from Roanoke Island to Beaufort, North Carolina, in January, 1909.

This South Carolina record extends the range of this boreal bird more than two hundred miles to the southward, and is the second species of the Alcidae recorded from the State.— ARTHUR T. WAYNE, Mount Pleasant, S. C.